

SUMMARY

The inventory of the significant natural areas, ecological communities, and rare species of Cleveland County was funded by Cleveland County and the North Carolina Natural Heritage Trust Fund. This report identifies Significant Natural Heritage Areas (SNHAs) in Cleveland County, which are comprised of stand-alone standard sites, large landscape-scale sites, and an aquatic habitat. It also provides general information on Cleveland County, as well as detailed descriptions of SNHAs including their significance, natural community types, rare species, management needs, and protection status. The report is intended to provide guidance for land use decisions by county government, conservation and land management agencies, and interested citizens. Voluntary conservation options are available for owners of lands identified for protection in this report. Field work was supervised by the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program (NC NHP) and took place primarily during the 2002 growing season. A large number of surveys were conducted in the Broad River and First Broad River drainage areas. Surveys were also conducted on private lands in the South Mountains and Crowder's Mountain areas.

The inventory identifies 15 standard sites (one of which contains eight significant subsites), two landscape-scale sites, and one aquatic habitat of natural significance at the county, regional, state, or national level, as determined by criteria established by the NC NHP. Sites meriting national significance are Foothills Megasite, South Mountains Macrosite, Rollins/South Mountains Natural Area, and First Broad River Headwaters Aquatic Habitat. Those of state significance are Broad River/Sandy Run Natural Areas and Crowders Mountain State Park and Vicinity. Regionally significant sites include High Rock/Gilead Ridge, Hicks Hill Bluffs and Forests, and First Broad Hop-hornbeam Natural Area. Sites of county significance include Camp Knob, First Broad/Five Points Bluff, Knob Creek Natural Area, First Broad Leatherwood Slope, Beaverdam Creek Natural Area, West Shelby Mesic Slope, Brushy Creek Bluff, Sandy Run/Lovelace Natural Area, and Sandy Run/Cliffside Natural Area.